

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims have been amended in an effort to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 and to distinguish more clearly over the art of record. The claims are now directed specifically to a **ski**. Furthermore and referring to elected Figs. 13 and 14, generic claim 1 recites device 21 comprising insert piece 89 in the at least one recess 13 disposed between binding mounting region 31 and a tip of the ski (see Fig. 1). In addition, claim 1 defines the specific gripping feature of the gripping surface of the insert piece, as described on top of page 39 of the specification, where Figs. 13 and 14 are described.

As amended, claim 1 clearly is not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by Stewart, cited, nor is it obvious therefrom. Stewart discloses a **bodyboard, not a ski**, whose top riding surface has a central torso-supporting region and a purchase-enhancing region at the front of the bodyboard. The purchase-enhancing region has palm grips 38a, 38b at the front corners of the bodyboard. The palm grips have enhanced surface friction characteristics (projection bumps 82) and serve to improve the grip of the user so that the user may control the bodyboard.

In contrast to this, neither Stewart nor the other prior art of record suggests any means for enabling the user of a ski to handle the ski, i.e. to pick up and carry the ski comfortably. This object, which is foreign to the art of record, is obtained by applicant with the specific features set forth in claim 1, which clearly distinguish from Stewart. The claimed ski has the advantage of enabling the user to carry the ski more comfortably. In view of the enhanced gripping surface, it is not necessary for the user to hold the ski with a powerful hand grip tending to cause cramps in the hands. Rather, the enhanced gripping surface enables the user to pick up the ski and to carry it with a minimum of effort. Furthermore, when users stand in line at a ski lift with their skis in their hands, for example, the safety of the users standing in line will be enhanced because the skis will be held by the users more securely.

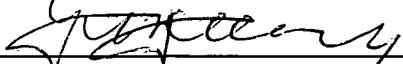
In view of the above, claims 1 is respectfully submitted to be patentable. The dependent claims define various optional and preferred features of the insert defined in claim 1, and they are believed to be allowable on their own merits.

A petition for a one-month extension is attached.

A sincere effort having been made to overcome all grounds

of rejection, favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-4, 6-14, 19-26, 32, 33 and 37-39 are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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